

U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Carson City District Office

**CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION  
ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND APPROVAL**

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**Project Creator:** Dan Westermeyer

**Field Office:** Stillwater

**Lead Office:** Stillwater

**Case File/Project Number:** SRP-NVC01000-11013

**Applicable Categorical Exclusion**

516 DM 11.9(H) : Recreation Management (1): Issuance of SRP's for day use or overnight use up to 14 consecutive nights; that impacts no more than 3 staging area acres; and/or for recreational travel along roads, trails, or in areas authorized in a land use plan.

**NEPA Number:** DOI-BLM-NV-C010-2011-0521-CX

**Project Name:** Modesto Ridge Runners OHV Rally

**Project Description:** Annual non-competitive, low-speed OHV rally and poker run east of Walker Lake, Hawthorne, Nevada. This event will be held on August 13<sup>st</sup>, 2011.

The Modesto Ridge Runners have submitted an application to conduct their annual off-highway poker run and rally that has been permitted under the five year authorization SRP –NV-030-06537 in 2006. This event is for two-axel, motorized vehicles such as dune buggies and jeeps and utilizes existing and established routes consisting of bladed county roads, right-of-way access roads and jeep trails. This will be a low speed, non-spectator family oriented event where no cross country travel is permitted. Event organizers are anticipating 40 to 60 participants who will travel the course to four designated checkpoints and one fuel stop if needed where playing cards will be issued. Poker hands will be revealed at the end of the race to determine the winner.

The course is approximately 91 miles in length located on public lands managed by the Stillwater Field Office and 9 miles of mostly paved road located in Hawthorne or the army depot. The event will begin at the southwest end of the town of Hawthorne, Nevada and head north to the historic Thorne Siding, then through the Gillis Range, around Chukar Ridge then back to Hawthorne. Some participants will overnight pre and post event in Hawthorne. Travel on BLM lands will be on established graded dirt roads and trails that can be driven by a typical truck.

The course selected for 2011 has been used in the past by both the Best in the Desert Vegas to Reno race and the VORRA Hawthorne race. The Modesto Ridge Runners have been staging this type of event since 1993 and are considered to be in good standing. This type of recreational use of public lands is considered to be casual use but requires a Special Recreation Permit due to the number of participants and the need to include stipulations. The event qualifies for Categorical Exclusion under the NEPA process based upon the reference to 516 DM listed below.

**Applicant Name:** Modesto Ridge Runners, Gordon Stewart, Event Coordinator

**Project Location:** Gillis Range east of Walker Lake, Nevada

**BLM Acres for the Project Area:**

**Land Use Plan Conformance:**

Section 8 – REC-2: Desired Outcomes, 1: “Provide a wide variety of recreation opportunities on public land under the administration of the Carson City Field Office.”

Section 8 – REC-2: Land Use Allocations, 1: “All public lands under CCFO jurisdiction are designated open to Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) use unless they are specifically restricted or closed.”

Section 8 – REC-6: Administrative Actions, 4: “On public land designated open for off highway vehicles, there will generally be no restrictions on use. Organized competitive OHV events have been allowed in Mason Valley, Wilson Canyon, Hungry Valley OHV Area, Moon Rocks, Lemmon Valley MX Area, Dead Camel Mountains, Salt Wells Area, Wassuk Range and in the Frontier 500 and Carson Rally OHV corridors. Organized events will be handled on a case-by-case basis through the Special Recreation Permit review and Environmental review process. Organized activity is generally restricted to existing roads and trail

**Name of Plan:** Carson City Field Office Consolidated Resource Management Plan (2001)

**Screening of Extraordinary Circumstances:** The following extraordinary circumstances apply to individual actions within categorical exclusions (43 CFR 46.215). The BLM has considered the following criteria: (Specialist review: initial in appropriate box)

<i>If any question is answered 'yes' an EA or EIS must be prepared.</i>	YES	NO
1. Would the Proposed Action have significant impacts on public health or safety? (Range-Jill Devaurs)		lo
2. Would the Proposed Action have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (EO 11990); floodplains (EO 11988); national monuments; migratory birds (EO 13186); and other ecologically significant or critical areas? (Archeology, Recreation, Wilderness, Wildlife, Range by allotment, Water Quality)		Donc 7/25/11 J 7-26-11
3. Would the Proposed Action have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA 102(2)(E)]? (PEC)		Donc 7/25/11
4. Would the Proposed Action have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks? (PEC)		Donc 7/25/11
5. Would the Proposed Action establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects? (PEC)		Donc 7/25/11
6. Would the Proposed Action have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects? (PEC)		Donc 7/25/11
7. Would the Proposed Action have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the NRHP as determined by the bureau or office? (Archeology)		Donc 7/25/11
8. Would the Proposed Action have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the list of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species? (Wildlife)		J 7-26-11
9. Would the Proposed Action violate federal law, or a State, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment? (PEC and Archeology)		Donc 7/25/11 Donc
10. Would the Proposed Action have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (EA 12898)? ((PEC)		Donc 7/25/11
11. Would the Proposed Action limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (EO 13007)? (Archeology)		Donc 7/25/11
12. Would the Proposed Action contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and EO 13112)? (Range-Jill Devaurs)		J 7-26-11

## SPECIALISTS' REVIEW:

During ID Team review of the above Proposed Action and extraordinary circumstances, the following specialists reviewed this CX:

Planning Environmental Coordinator, Steve Kramer: *SKM 7/25/11*  
Public Health and Safety/Grazing/Noxious Weeds, Jill Devaurs: *la 7/25/11 (PubH&S, Grazing)*  
Recreation/Wilderness/VRM/LWC, Dan Westermeyer: *JD 7-29-11 (Weeds)*  
Wildlife/T&E (BLM Sensitive Species), John Wilson: *JW 7-26-11*  
Archeology, Susan McCabe: *SM 7/25/11 SPA App C.21*  
Water Quality, Gabe Venegas: *GV 7/25/11*  
Soils, Jill Devaurs/Linda Appel/Chelsy Simerson: *la 7/25/11 JD 7-29-11*

**CONCLUSION:** Based upon the review of this Proposed Action, I have determined that the above-described project is a categorical exclusion, in conformance with the LUP, and does not require an EA or EIS. A categorical exclusion is not subject to protest or appeal.

Approved by:

*Teresa J. Knutson*      *08/02/2011*  
Teresa J. Knutson      (date)  
Field Manager  
Stillwater Field Office